

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY KAMPALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3113

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L KAMPALA 2920

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR VS UG US

SUBJECT: GENERAL AMIN'S BANQUET FOR PRG PRESIDENT ATTENDED BY
MOST OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS

REF: KAMPALA 2909

1. SUMMARY. MOST MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS, INCLUDING NUMBER WHOSE GOVERNMENTS DO NOT RECOGNIZE PRG, ATTENDED GENERAL AMIN'S STATE DINNER FOR VISITING PRG PRESIDENT THO ON OCTOBER 1. WESTERN REPRESENTATIVES WHO HAD DECIDED TO ATTEND GAVE ME ONE OF FOLLOWING REASONS FOR THEIR DECISION: DINNER GIVEN BY PREESIDENT IS A COMMAND PERFORMANCE; THEY DID'T KNOW WHOM DINNER WAS HONORING AND HAD NOT BOTHERED TO INQUIRE; NON-ATTENDANCE WOULD ANTAGONIZE GENERAL AMIN AS WELL AS PLAY INTO HANDS OF COMMUNIST REPRESENTATIVES WHO WOULD DOMINATE THE AFFAIR. FRENCH AMBASSADOR, WHO IS DEAN OF CORPS, APPARENTLY INFLUENCED A NUMBER OF WESTERN COLLEAGUES WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE HAD SECOND THOUGHTS. AS WE ARE REPORTING BY UNCLASSIFIED SEPTTEL, AT BANQUET GENERAL AMIN ROUNDLY CONDEMNED USG FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF PARIS CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY

2. AT OCTOBER 1 NIGERIAN NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION I WAS SURPRISED AND DISMAYED TO LEARN THAT PRACTICALLY ENTIRE KAMPALA DIPLOMATIC CORPS WAS PLANNING TO ATTEND GENERAL AMIN'S STATE DINNER FOR
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VISITING PRG PRESIDENT T O LATER THAT EVENING. OF THOSE CHIEFS

OF MISSION I WAS ABLE TO TALK WITH I FOUND ONLY FOUR WHO HAD DECLINED INVITATION OR WERE NOT ATTENDING: UNDP REP PRATTLEY 8"SAID: SIMPLE: PRG IS NOT MEMBER OF UN"); DUTCH CONSUL REED ("YOU KNOW MY POSITION ON VIETNAM"); SOUTH KOREAN CHARGE HWANG ("NOT INVITED"); AND ITALIAN AMB. FALASCHI ("WHAT DINNER?").

3. I WAS ABLE TO TALK THREE PEOPLE OUT OF ATTENDING: NEW ACTING BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER HENNESSY; SAUDI AMBASSADOR HABABI; AND GREEK CONSUL CALOGEROPOULOS. HENNESSY, WHO DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE VERY EXPERIENCED, LAMELY EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD NOT GONE TO ENTEBBE FOR ARRIVAL CEREMONY WELCOMING THO BUT HE FELT HE HAD TO ATTEND A STATE DINNER AND IT WAS A COMMAND PERFORMANCE. IF THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND INVITES YOU TO DINNER, YOU ATTEND. I SAID QUEEN'S PROTOCOL OFFICER WOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO INVITE AN ENVOY WHOSE GOVERNMENT DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE GOVERNMENT OF THE VISITOR SHE WAS ENTERTAINING. THIS AND OTHER ARGUEMENTS CONVINCED HENNESSY HE MAKING A MISTAKE IF HE ATTENDED. THE SAUDI NEEDED ONLY TO BE TOLD THAT HE HAD NO BUSINESS ATTENDING SINCE HIS GOVERNMENT DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE PRG. THIS ARGUMENT ALSO APPEALED TO THE GREEK, WHO PHONED HIS AMBASSADOR IN NAIROBI TO ASK WHAT HE SHOULD DO. AMBASSADOR TOLD HIM NOT TO ATTEND.

4. FROM REMARKS OF SEVERAL PEOPLE I DEDUCED THAT DEAN OF CORPS, FRENCH AMBASSADOR THABAULT, HAD BEEN ADVISING PEOPLE WHO INQUIRED THAT THEY SHOULD ATTEND DINNER. I THEREFORE APPROACHED GROUP CONSISTING OF THABAULT, WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR KOPF AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR ZAKHAROV. I SAID TO THABAULT I WAS SURPRISED HE WAS ATTENDING DINNER SINCE I HAD JUST READ SOMEWHERE THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS DEVELOPING ITS RELATIONS WITH SAIGON AND HANOI BUT HAD NOT RECOGNIZED THE PRG. THABAULT'S RESPONSE WAS THAT SINCE PARIS HAD HOSTED THE VIETNAM PEACE TALKS IT WAS PROPER THAT HE ATTEND AN AFFAIR GIVEN FOR A REPRESENTATIVE OF ONE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TALKS. I SAID THAT DID NOT APPEAR TO ME TO BE A RELEVANT CONSIDERATION, FOR IT WAS A MATTER OF EITHER RECOGNIZING A GOVERNMENT OR NOT RECOGNIZING IT. SOVIET AMBASSADOR INTERRUPTED WITH WHAT HE CLEARLY THOUGHT WAS A CLEVER RETORT: "YOU SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH THE PRG, SO YOU HAVE RECOGNIZED THEIR EXISTENCE." I RESPONDED THAT MY GOVERNMENT HAD MADE IT CLEAR BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE PEACE TALKS THAT WE RECOGNIZED ONLY ONE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM, THAT OF PRESIDENT THIEU IN SAIGON.

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5. WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR THEN TOOK ME ASIDE AND IN SOMEWHAT APOLOGITIC TONE EXPLAINED THAT HE AND THABAULT HAD DISCUSSED MATTER AND HAD COME TO CONCLUSION THAT THEY OUGHT TO ATTEND DINNER, FOR IT WAS IMPORTANT NOT TO ANTAGONIZE GENERAL AMIN AND IF WESTERN REPRESENTATIVES DID NOT ATTEND IT WOULD PERMIT THE COMMUNISTS TO TAKE ALL THE LIMELIGHT. I REPLIED THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT GENEERAL AMIN BE ASSISTED TO LEARN

SOME OF THE ELEMENTARY LESSONS OF DIPLOMACY, E. G. THAT IF HE WANTS TO CHOOSE SIDES IT DOES NOT MEAN HE CAN FORCE OTHERS TO TOE HIS LINE. I ASKED KOPF WHAT HE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IF I HAD ATTENDED A STATE DINNER GIVEN FOR AN EAST GERMAN VISITOR LAST YEAR. KOPF SAID HIS GOVERNMENT NOW RECOGNIZES EAST GERMANY. "YES, NOW." I SAID, "BUT I'M TALKING ABOUT LAST YEAR." KOPF SAID HE COULD UNDERSTAND WHY I COULD NOT ATTEND DINNER FOR PRG PRESIDENT, FOR I MIGHT HAVE TO WALK OUT IF THE GENERAL ATTACKED THE USG. MY REPLY WAS THAT IT WAS NOT A MATTER OF HAVING TO WALK OUT. IT WAS SIMPLY THAT WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE PRG, AND IN MY OPINION CHIEFS OF MISSION OF COUNTRIES THAT DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE PRG HAD NO BUSINESS ATTENDING SUCH AN AFFAIR.

6. BY THIS TIME THOSE ATTENDING THE DINNER HAD LEFT THE RECEPTION SO THERE WAS NO POINT PURSUING THE SUBJECT.

7. COMMENT: THABAULT'S UNDERSTANDING OF PROTOCOL LEAVES A GOOD DEAL TO BE DESIRED, BUT THERE IS MORE TO IT THAN THAT. FROM OUR PAST REPORTING DEPARTMENT IS AWARE THAT THERE EXISTS HERE A THABAULT-KOPF SCHOOL OF THOUGHT ABOUT UGANDA, THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE OF WHICH IS THAT WE ALL OUGHT TO BE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO GET ALONG WITH GENERAL AMIN, ALMOST REGARDLESS OF ANY OTHER CONSIDERATION. I NEED NOT REPEAT IN MY OPINION THEIR MODUS OPERANDI IS WORSE THAN MISGUIDED AND SIMPLY PERMITS AMIN TO MAKE FOOLS OF THEM.

KEELEY

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